



MEMORANDUM

Office of the Deans
UCLA College
2300 Murphy Hall
143801

July 7, 2009

Chancellor Gene Block
2147 Murphy Hall
University of California Los Angeles
Campus 140501

Dear Chancellor Block:

Re: Response from the UCLA Physical Sciences Chairs to President Yudof's salary reduction options

The Chairs and Institute Director in the Division of Physical Sciences are well aware of the substantial challenges now faced by the University of California. Having already planned for and implemented the adjustments required to absorb the five percent cut in state operating funds that have been allocated to all units at UCLA, we are fully cognizant of the painful reality of responding to those challenges.

We take this opportunity to emphasize our strongly held opinions regarding the salary reduction options laid out by President Yudof in his letter of June 17 to the UC community. We ask that you forward these comments to President Yudof in time for them to impact his budget proposal to be made at the July UC Regents meeting.

1) Regarding salary cuts versus furloughs:

None of the salary reduction options represent a real strategy for dealing with the dire straits in which we find ourselves as a result of the long-term and rapidly accelerating reductions in state support to the university. They are, at best, quick fixes, and arise out of a failure of leadership at all levels. It has taken decades of striving to achieve the high international stature currently enjoyed by many of the academic units at UCLA. We are deeply concerned that the present failure of leadership will, in short order, reverse these accomplishments.

However, if forced to choose between the pay cut and furlough options proposed by President Yudof, we strongly prefer furloughs. This will maintain the salary base for both retirement and summer salary. Just as importantly, while furloughs are transparently a temporary measure that would have to be renewed on a yearly basis, there is no guarantee that pay cuts would or ever could be reversed.

To opt for pay cuts over furloughs simply for the sake of administrative convenience is not acceptable. There is nothing convenient about the effects of the pay reductions on the daily lives of UC employees. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the university administration to ameliorate the effects of the pay reduction by whatever means possible, even if this necessitates administrative

inconvenience. Accordingly, faculty should be permitted to earn additional days of summer salary and/or increase their consulting activity to replace income lost as a result of furloughs.

2) Regarding extension of the salary reduction to employees compensated by non-state sources:

We see no rationale at all for cutting the salaries of research staff or other personnel who are compensated by non-state funding sources. The resulting harm to the morale of the affected staff will certainly reduce research productivity and the prestige of the University. This will, in turn, contribute to a downward spiral by reducing our ability to raise extramural research support. Thus, the policy of salary reductions regardless of fund source has the pernicious effect of actually decreasing the financial resources available to the core units of the University of California.

Assuming an average pay reduction of 7%, applying this reduction to the \$9.5 billion University-wide salary base will reduce the aggregate income of UC employees by about \$665 million. Yet, President Yudof states that only \$195 million of this salary savings (the amount that comes from the state-funded portion of the payroll) can be used to offset the projected \$800 million UC deficit in the 2009-2010 fiscal year. If there is logic in reducing the income of UC employees by \$665 million to achieve \$195 million in deficit reduction, it has not been made clear to us. This huge and unnecessary reduction in the pay of UC employees will further depress the state's economy and further reduce state income and sales tax revenues.

Thank you very much for considering these comments. We share with you and President Yudof a commitment to do everything possible to maintain the excellence of UCLA.

Sincerely yours,

Professor Albert Courey, Chair
Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry

Professor James McWilliams, Chair
Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences

Professor Ferdinand Coroniti, Chair
Department of Physics and Astronomy

Professor Craig Manning, Chair
Department of Earth and Space Sciences

Professor Sorin Popa, Chair
Department of Mathematics

Professor T. Mark Harrison
Director, Institute for Geophysics and Planetary
Physics

Professor Jan De Leeuw, Chair
Department of Statistics